1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

and 40). Miss Agnes Branting, who has kindly examined the textiles here reproduced, found the frontlet in fig. 40 especially interesting, as similar fillets are woven by the peasantry in very many provinces of Sweden, for instance Scania, Halland, Wermland and Helsingland. Miss Branting writes on this matter as follows: »Fillets of this kind are made without any other implement than just any sort of object to which the yarn can be attached, say a weighted pincushion held on the knee. The weaving is begun from the centre of the fillet by crossing one yarn over another; for each turn a yarn is added (from a number fastened with pins) on either side. When the edge yarn has been reached, this is turned inwards, and the plaiting then proceeds from the edges towards the centre. This gives a certain firmness and compactness to the edges, and makes the middle portion slightly thinner, as may be noticed if looked at against the light.»[1]

Sometimes the frontlets are decorated with snail-shell spangles, sewn on, although such pieces of magnificence as the frontlet here shown in fig. 41 are very rare. From fig. 42 can be seen the way this frontlet is meant to be worn. These very decorative snail shell spangles are made from the shells of a large, white land snail (Borus oblongus, fig. 43), common in the Chaco. The Choroti do not themselves make these snail-shell spangles, but obtain them through barter from other tribes.

Narrow frontlets of woollen yarn (see fig. 30: the 3rd and 4th men from the left) or birdskin (see figs. 17 and 30: the boy who is fifth from the left) are of very common occurrence; less frequently seen are frontlets made from palm leaves, some of which are provided with chin straps, so as not to slip easily off the head (fig. 44).

Fig. 38. Legging, of deer skin with yellowish-brown hair covering remaining. Worn for protection against thorny plants. Choroti, Gran Chaco, Bolivia. Vu. Rksm. 03. 3. 383.

At dances and other festive occasions, the men are fond of wearing particularly handsome, broad frontlets or head ornaments of stiff or downy

[1] Compare with this a method of hand-weaving described from the Choroti by Erland Nordenskiöld. Nordenskiöld (13), p. 111.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

To the frontlets are affixed one or more feathers (figs. 32, 16—18, 24, 30 and others). These are obtained from many different birds, ranging from ostrich and white heron to domestic fowls. The feathers are often nicked,

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Fig. 40. Frontlet, of wool, with angular ornament in brownish-black and greyish-white. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 9.

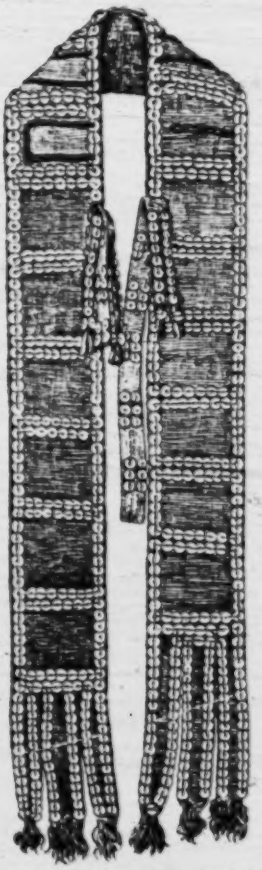

Fig. 41. Head ornament, consisting of a red, woollen, frontlet, 7 cm wide, with snail-shell spangles sewn on, and, in front, beset with turquoise-blue glass beads. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 2/3. Riksm. 10. 3. 134.

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Fig. 42. A Lengua Indian with head ornament, »scalp lock» and whistle (the latter hanging round the neck on a string). From Hawtrey.[1]

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Fig. 43. Borus oblongus, a white land snail, common in the Chaco. From its shell the Indians make small spangles, with which they adorn themselves. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 47.

[1] Hawtrey (1), p. 282, fig. 2.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

Round the ankles the men often wear birdskin bands, in appearance similar to the armlets (fig. 30, the second man from the left). There may also be seen anklets made up from ostrich feathers lashed on to a thickish cord of caraguatá or wool (fig. 59). According to what several Choroti Indians told me, anklets are worn not only as ornaments, but also as a protection against snakebite. If a man wearing feathered anklets should happen to step upon, or close to, a snake, the latter, my informants assured me, would almost for certain first strike at the showy feathers. This warns the man of his danger, and he will generally have time to jump aside before the snake is ready to strike again. This belief is also found among the Lengua.[1]

Fig. 59. Anklet, made of ostrich feathers tied round a thickish piece of string. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/1. Riksm. 03. 3. 34, a.

The articles of dress, as well as the ornamental objects,[2] that I have described in this chapter, are, as I have said, only such things as appertain to the stronger sex; but one ornament, however, which to an equal extent is worn by men as well as women, is the finger ring made of lizard skin (fig. 60). These rings are made in a rather original manner. Anybody wanting rings, whether for himself or for giving away, kills a lizard. The part of the animals tail that in thickness about equals the size of a human finger, is cut, according to its segments, into slices from 2 to 5 mm wide, and then the inside of the sections is removed. The rings are now ready for use, and it only remains to try them on for the best fit. As we know, the tail of a lizard tapers towards the tip, and this makes the rings differ somewhat in size, so that it is no difficult matter to find rings to fit any sizes in fingers.

Fig. 60. Finger ring of lizard skin. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/1. Riksm. 03. 3. 35.

[1] Grubb (1), p. 73.

[2] Many of these ornaments have a magical character. In Chap. VI I shall deal with this point more fully.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

Choroti bows.

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Catalogue Nr., Riksm. coll. 03. 3.	Bow-stave material	Length of bow stave, cm	Transverse section at middle of bow stave	Upper string-hold	Lower string-hold	String-material	Remarks
245	Hard, resilient, free from knots	150	Type A	Not pared down	Not pared down	Twisted rawhide	String hold barely noticeably pared down
247	Hard, resilient; less free from knots	150	» »	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	
250	Hard, resilient, free from knots	146	» »	Pared to a neck	Pared to a neck	»	Bow stave near point of upper end sheathed in a rawhide covering, slipped on, about 4.5 cm long
254	Hard, resilient, free from knots	133	» AB	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	Winding for fixing string loop
256	Hard, resilient, free from knots	146	» B	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	Winding for fixing string loop
255	Hard, resilient; less free from knots	146	» »	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	Unusually sharp pointed end
251	Hard, resilient, free from knots	144	» »	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	
252	Hard, resilient, free from knots	136	» »	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	Bow stave near its middle provided with a rawhide sheath, about 8 cm long
253	Hard, resilient, free from knots	133	» »	Not pared down	Pared to a neck	»	Winding, to prevent slipping of string loop. A 5.5 cm long sheath of rawhide fitted on, near lower end of stave
258	Hard, resilient, free from knots	142	» BC	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	
277	Hard, resilient, free from knots	147	» C	Not pared down	Not pared down	»	Winding for fixing string loop.

of convex type — i. e, the staves have a convex string side, and a plane, or slightly concave, back — but I have not seen any Choroti bows with that kind of stave, which does not exclude the possibility of their occurring by way of exceptions. The convex bow is, however, better than the concave kind, and all technically perfected European target bows have their staves convex.[1] The fact of the concave bow being common among a people as low-cultured as the Choroti strikes one as something less to be wondered at than that this type of bow also was in use (together with the concave type) among the comparatively highly cultured Andean tribes.[2]

411 825 In some of the Choroti bows, a sleeve-like covering of rawhide has been fitted on to the stave (see Table »Choroti bows», under »Remarks»).

[1] Walround (1), p. 286 et seq.

[2] I have previously published an attempt at explaining how the concave type came into being. See von Rosen (10), pp. 34, 35 and 78, 83.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

These casings are not sewn together, but consist of the seamless skin of the tail or leg of some animal. At first I took it as a matter of course that these casings had been put on solely for the purpose of strengthening the bow at some point where it looked like breaking. In order to make certain, I cut loose a casing of this kind, which was on the bow numbered 03. 3. 253, but I could not discover the least crack, knot, or other defect pointing to any necessity for reinforcing the bow at that point. But, between the casing and the stave, I did find some flattened cakes of excrement from some herbivorous animal. Whether these excrements had *purposely* been placed inside the casing, is of course impossible to say, but if they were put there on purpose, then they undoubtedly possessed some magical significance. In such case the idea must have been that they would bring good luck in the hunting of the species of game whose excrement had been placed inside the casing (see p. 181). As among the Indians there is a very wide-spread notion that whoever possesses the skin of some animal also possesses a certain mastery over the spirit of that animal,[1] it is not impossible that the skin casing itself is of a magic character. Professor Emil Holmgren, who, at my request, kindly carried out a microscopical examination of the excrement flakes as well as of the piece of skin, considers that the character of the latter points to its having been a part of the tail of an animal of the goat, sheep, or *cat* tribe, and that the colour and grouping of the hairs are indicative of the *last-mentioned* category.[2] That parts of animals' bodies are used by the Chaco Indians as hunting amulets, is, among other things, evident from a statement by Nordenskiöld upon the subject of hunting among the Ashluslay, who are neighbours of the Choroti: »In hunting, the Ashluslay make use of various amulets. If, in the always indispensable caraguatá bag, one carries the head of a tortoise, then one is able to stalk close up to the deer, without putting them to flight. When hunting ostriches, it is a good thing to bring along pieces of skin taken from the breast of ostriches which one has killed.»[3] As to the other two bows, I have refrained from cutting off the skin casings, and therefore cannot say whether the latter conceal any cracks or not. On the staves of the bows Nos. 03. 3. 252 there are, however, to be seen, close to the casing, several deep scorings, running

[1] Karsten (4), p. 90.
[2] Opinion dated August 24th, 1921. Roskelstad collection of Manuscripts, Volume 1921, »H».
[3] Nordenskiöld (13), p. 40.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choróti SK6

shape as the strange-looking Choroti arrow, which is seen in fig. 102.[1] The Esquimaux, like the Choroti, live in a bone-and-wood age, although the latter people to a large extent use the bone-hard wood of several species of Chaco trees in the place of bone. In both cases the arrows are intended for hunting big game. It is a strange thing, however, that the arrows just referred to, from Greenland and from the Chaco, are so much alike in shape that one might point to a reproduction of the Esquimaux arrow in question as being the type of a lanceolate, barbed, Choroti arrow. As to the ancient Indian arrows of Chaco type found within the Andean region, previously referred to, it is, however, not only their form that is identical with the Chaco arrows, but also the material (reed, and species of wood that do not grow in the mountain region) is typical of the Chaco. This being so, it may with great certainty be established that the ancient Indian arrows in question really originate from the Chaco, and that we here have one of the many indications that point to old-time communication between the mountain region and the plains to the east of it.

The Choroti hunt all sorts of game, from jaguars, pumas and ostriches, to lizards and rats. Among edible game are counted, among others, also birds of prey (even vultures), foxes, armadillos, rats, lizards and snakes. On the other hand, some Choroti, at least, will not touch deer's flesh, as they believe these animals to be possessed by evil spirits.[2] Some of the species of animals just enumerated, too, are by certain individual Choroti considered dangerous to eat (see p. 114).

When the Choroti are out hunting with bow and arrow, they naturally endeavour to stalk as closely as possible up to the game, and then occasionally employ a stratagem common to many tribes who live by the chase, namely that of tying tall leafy bunches about waist and shoulders, so as to give the hunter the appearance of a bush. This stalking trick is also known to the Lengua. On this point, Grubb writes to the following effect: 'The ostrich is a very wild, though stupid bird, and the hunting methods of the Lengua are based on this fact. When hunting in a palm forest, the hunter ties a few palm leaves together and fastens them to his head and shoulders, so as to resemble a small palm. By means of this disguise he has no difficulty in getting within easy range of

[1] Solberg (1), p. 73, fig. 54, bottom row of arrows, the second specimen from the left.
[2] Karsten (2), p. 33.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

As regards snail- and mussel-shell necklaces (figs. 56—58) it should be specially mentioned that those of the first-named kind, at least, are by the Choroti looked upon as amulets for warding off illness and other evil things.[1] It is not improbable that necklaces made out of glass beads, which have been obtained from the whites, are also held to be amulets. This because of the fact that, among many primitive peoples, the belief has been observed that such glass beads as in modern times they have acquired by way of trading[2] possess magic properties,[3] as well as do the glass-[4] or stone beads[5] that they themselves have found in ancient dwelling-site deposits or graves.

Occasionally the Choroti wear anklets of birdskin, or ostrich (Rhea) feathers tied together (fig. 59). On page 71 I have mentioned that these anklets are not exclusively ornaments, but that they also serve a purely practical purpose. The fact is that the Choroti, as well as other Chaco Indians, regard them as a protection against snake-bite, in that a snake is more likely to strike at the feathers that are on the anklet than at the leg, or foot, of the one who is wearing it. Karsten states, on the authority of Grubb, that the Lengua for the same reason wear anklets made of feathers. But to Karsten this natural explanation is not sufficient, for he remarks that Grubb might have added that these anklets are, at the same time, looked upon as amulets, because the Indians believe that an evil spirit accompanies the snake venom in entering the foot of a person bitten.[6] Karsten endeavours to show that all feather ornaments are, by the Choroti Indians, regarded as magic objects.[7]

Most primitive peoples ascribe magical properties to many of their belongings. For example, our Viking forefathers largely regarded their weapons and other equipment as possessing magical powers. It is well known that the Vikings believed that, for instance, swords, and other edged implements, in some magic way could give their owners protection against evil spirits. But the main purpose of swords and edged tools was

[1] Karsten (1), p. 139.
[2] See for example von Rosen (4), p. 305.
[3] See fig. 182: 20—21, and text on pp. 169 and 170.
[4] See, e. g., von Rosen (1), p. 251.
[5] See, e. g., von Rosen (1) p. 200.
[6] »He might have added that they are at the same time regarded as magical charms, since with the snake's poison an evil spirit is believed to enter the foot.» Karsten (4), p. 119.
[7] Karsten (1), Chap. III.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

wooden awl, so that blood flows.[1] In reply to my question, Nordenskiöld has been kind enough to tell me that he never saw the Indians using awls of any other material than wood for this purpose. On the other hand, both he and I, and other Chaco students, have seen Choroti pricking themselves with bone awls (figs. 185 and 186) when feeling tired. In order to ascertain whether the Indians in making their bone awls gave preference to any particular bone of any particular animal, I asked Professor Lönnberg to try and identify the animals from which the material had been taken for all the bone awls in my collection. Professor Lönnberg very kindly acceded to my request, and here below I give the result of his investigation.[2]

Awl No. 03. 3. 183. Upper part of right ulna of a large feline animal, probably a female puma.
» » 03. 3. 82. » » » left » » » feline animal, probably a young puma.
» » 03. 3. 181. » » » » » » » » (somewhat smaller than the foregoing).
» » 03. 3. 84. Lower part of canon bone of small ruminant (deer calf?).
» » 03. 3. 184. » » » » » » » »
» » 03. 3. 185. » » » » » » » »
» » 03. 3. 83. Probably a fragment of ulna of a bird (raptorial?)
» » 03. 3. 180. » » » » » » » » of a species somewhat smaller than the foregoing.

The remainder of the bone awls that were submitted by me to Professor Lönnberg consisted of fragments, impossible of determination.

Unquestionably, it must strike one as peculiar that out of eight determinable pieces of bone, three of them probably consist of ulnæ of such a ferocious animal as the puma (the killing of which to the Indians is a matter of deadly peril). Another thing, which is in my opinion noteworthy, is that two of the awls probably consist of ulnæ of raptorial birds, and that the three remaining ones all consist of canon bones of some species of small ruminant. In fig. 81 I have reproduced an awl consisting of the jawbone of a Siluroid: this implement, however, at the same time being a kind of stamp for applying red paint to the face. Whilst paying a visit to the Gothenburg Museum, I was, by the courtesy of the Keeper of Ethnography, Baron Nordenskiöld, given the opportunity of going through the collection of bone awls that he has acquired from Indians of the Chaco, which collection now forms part of the Museum. On examining

[1] Nordenskiöld (18), p. 49.
[2] In accordance with letters dated July 3 and 18, respectively, Rockefeller collection of Manuscripts, Volume 1931, letter 1.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

way, *and by renewed research among the Indians*, that we shall be enabled to obtain a thorough knowledge of their conception of magic blood-letting by means of awls.

In the foregoing I have mentioned that Choroti bow-staves are sometimes provided with a small skin casing, slipped on, and that on opening one of these casings I found that it contained excrements from some herbivorous animal. It is of course impossible to tell with certainty what the motive was for putting on this skin casing (see pp. 88 and 89), but I think it probable that it was put on the bow for some magic reason. It is noteworthy that it contained excrement. The fact of this being so is a circumstance that, in my opinion, especially points to the casing being of a magical character, for, according to the Chaco Indians' way of thinking, certain excrements possess magic properties and are often made use of in casting spells.[1]

All kinds of illnesses are by the Choroti considered to be caused by evil spirits. As yet, however, we know but little of these Indians' conception of the character and curing of different illnesses. Once Nordenskiöld called in medical aid from a medicine man among the Choroti, and this is how he describes the way in which the medicine man set about it:

'On many occasions, in the villages, I have seen the medicine men practising their profession. One day, among the Choroti, when I was feeling a bit seedy, I called one of those gentry to my camp. Giving out that I had a severe pain in the lower part of my chest, I asked him if he cared to cure me. He promised to come to me in the evening. At nightfall he arrived, accompanied by a colleague. They insisted on being left alone with me. Moberg and Andersson were consequently turned out, and sentries were posted so as to prevent anyone unauthorized gaining access to the hut. For a start, they made me strip to the skin, and then lie down. They stroked me with their hands over the chest, the sides of my body and the stomach, and then they spat on me. After that, they set to blowing on me, and then they laid themselves down and sucked hard at my chest, in particular at the spot where I had complained of the pain. After having sucked for a while, they turned away and pretended to vomit. Whatever they vomited up in this way, they did not show me, but, as they squeezed it between their fingers, it looked as if they had been squeezing worms. This performance lasted, I think, the

[1] See, for example, Nordenskiöld (13), pp. 93 and 98.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5

make the throw with the right hand alone, leaving the left free to steer or direct the boat.»

In the mountainous districts and on the Peruvian coast it was in part no doubt the lack of wood suitable for making bows that made this a rare weapon, but also in part the advantage of having the left hand free while using the throwing stick.

The bow (Fig. 4) that is used by the Indians dealt with here, is very poor in comparison with the bows used by most of the Indians inhabiting N.E. Bolivia. The transverse section shows a very varying form. The two ends of the bow are sharpened to a point, and are not provided with notches to hold the string. Bows of this sort, without notches, seem to belong to a very old cultural phase in S. America, for we only find them in the extreme south, and among a small number of very primitive peoples in Bolivia and Brazil.

PATER SCHMIDT mentions the following tribes that have bows ending in a simple point without notches for the string: Botokudo, Bugre, Chamacoco, Saputki, Mataco, Toba, Angaité, Payaguá, Mbayá (Kadiuéo), Siriono, Pampas Indians, Mirana, Yanaperi and Uašmiri[1])

A few tribes have very indistinct notches at the end of the bow.

To the tribes enumerated by PATER SCHMIDT I can add, on the basis of archaeological material, the Indians in the Puna de Jujuy in Argentina[2]).

The bow-strings of the Choroti and Ashluslay Indians are made partly out of caraguatá fibres, partly out of strips of skin. Bowstrings of animal material are only found among the Indians in southern S. America as far north as the Chaco. (Map 2). In tropical S. America such bow-strings are unpractical and rare. Bow-strings of tendons or strips of skin

[1]) PATER SCHMIDT, p. 1033.

[2]) LEHMANN-NITSCHE (1) Pl. 2, fig. 3; pl. 3, fig. 16.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

process and the other procreative functions of the woman is realized. The attainment of puberty therefore for the Indian girl certainly means the beginning of her sexual life, but at the same time it means her entrance into a very critical epoch of development, during which she is often — especially at child-birth and during the following menses — exposed to supernatural dangers. Hence the initiation ceremonies at puberty have for their object partly her direct protection against these dangers for the time being, partly her purification once for all from the evils associated with her sexual functions during the years to come or — to express it more plainly — to *harden* her against evil spirits. From this point of view we have to regard all puberty ceremonies of the Indians, even such practices as painting, scarification, and tattooing of the body or face, often undertaken with girls on the attainment of puberty.

In the dances and conjurations performed in honour of girls at puberty it is the women who, contrary to what is generally the rule in religious ceremonies, play the most prominent part. Among the *Choroti* the puberty of girls is celebrated with a magical dance called *Káusima* after the instrument which the women use for it; the instrument is called *káhuis*. The *káhuis* is a dancing-staff, two or three meters in length, made of a light kind of wood or bamboo, which has a bunch of deer's hoofs tied at the top. These rattles produce a hollow sound when the staff is struck on the ground and are supposed to possess a mysterious power to influence the spirits. This power of course must be explained from the fact that to the Choroti the deer is a demoniacal animal. The *káhuis* staff is the only magical instrument used by the Choroti women and it is never handled by the men.

The dance begins at the first new moon after the appearance of the signs of puberty, because the moon is believed to cause and have great influence upon the menstruation of women. It is performed every day until the following new moon, sometimes even still longer. At a *Káusima* dance which I witnessed the arrangement was as follows. The mother of the girl and some other elderly women formed a circle, or rather an elliptic ring, outside the hut where the girl was, each holding her rattling dancing-staff. Close to the ring four medicine-men were sitting at equal distances from one another, holding their rattle gourds (*pelite*). There were besides two more medicine-men standing up, each provided with a drum. During the dance the women moved round ceremoniously with slow, regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their rattle staffs which they struck on the ground. The men outside the ring also chanted, shaking

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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in their magical dances and conjurations the Indians as a matter of fact most often deal with these particular evil spirits.

These are features common to the religious beliefs of all Indians of the Chaco; indeed they are found among all South American Indians. But even in the Chaco this general belief in spirits appears in somewhat different forms among different tribes. The *Choroti* fancy that the spirits, *möhsek*, in their external appearance have the shape of old, withered men (*kihilahs*). They are, in the imagination of the Indians, provided with wings, which enable them to move rapidly through the air. Owing to their bird-like appearance the spirits are also called *ahuena* («the birds»). They are countless in number, mostly invisible, and as a general rule evilly disposed towards mankind. I never met an Indian who professed to have *seen* a *möhsek*, but nearly all say that they have *heard* their voices at night. One peculiarity of the demons of the Chaco Indians is that they only exist at night. As soon as darkness sets in the Choroti Indian fears mysterious dangers from the *möhsek*, who are then believed to draw near the villages in great numbers and even to enter into the huts, visiting the inhabitants with sickness and death. This is the reason why a traveller living with the Choroti can hear from some house nearly every night the low chant of some old man accompanied by the dull sound of the rattle gourd, *pelite*, with which he tries to conjure and keep off the supernatural pests. At daybreak however the spirits are supposed to leave for the forests and the plains — with a piping or whistling sound, the Indians explained to me, which they are very clever in imitating. For this purpose the Choroti use a special kind of round whistle which they generally wear hanging round the neck as an ornament. At their religious dances they produce, from time to time, shrill whistling sounds with these whistles, professedly with a view to conjuring the *möhsek*. The Indians believe that they can keep supernatural beings at bay by imitating them in their external appearance or their sounds.

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In the Chaco many weird sounds are heard at night which are apt to fill the natives with superstitious fear. The Choroti frequently told me about the »nightly whistling of the spirits» (*yap möhsek ahnäh*). The peculiar piping or whistling which is most often identified with the sound of the spirits is, I believe, produced by certain insects living on the stems or branches of the trees. The spirit of the tusca tree was specially mentioned to me, but this spirit is said to be a »good» being.

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The idea of the Choroti, that the spirits have the shape of old men, has given rise to a peculiar and cruel custom. They do not allow their

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2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco

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there are several evidences of a nature animism, although as a general rule only such objects and phenomena as especially strike their imagination or with which some remarkable incidents are connected, are incidentally or permanently looked upon as being animated by spirits. There are evil demons in the sky, which among other things cause such strange phenomena as eclipses of the moon, of which the Choroti have the same idea as the Mataco and most other Chaco tribes. Other evil spirits of the sky cause drought, which in the Chaco forms the greatest obstacle to a successful cultivation of the fields. The demons keep the rain back, and the Indians in consequence try, during the dry season, to conjure them by drumming, shaking rattles and chanting so as to compel them to release rain. On the other hand, there are demons operating in the violent thunderstorms, although these are generally accompanied by torrents of rain. The Choroti believe that thunder and the flash of lightning are caused by a great number of *mōhsek* who are rushing through the air and making an onset upon the village. These spirits are more often called *ahuéna*, »the birds», and thunder and lightning are therefore generally called by the Indians simply *ahuéna*, although the proper name in the Choroti language is *súntini*. Every time a burst of thunder is heard, the Indians, sitting in their huts, begin to shout and scream loudly, in order to frighten away the molesting supernatural visitors. There are evil spirits in the violent whirlwinds and sand-storms so common in the Chaco, as well as in the cold south wind, *niúk*, which during the dry season sweeps over the plains and produces rheumatism and chills among the natives, badly equipped as they are against cold weather. The warm north wind again, *úkine*, is sent by »good» spirits. Thus the radical contrast between the cold south wind and the warm north wind, both of which are sent by supernatural agents, has been to the Choroti the main reason for making a distinction between two of the four cardinal points.

Spirits, *mōhsek*, are also believed to animate *trees* and *plants* -- bad spirits poisonous and harmful plants, good spirits the beneficial and useful ones. The ideas which the Indians entertain about plant spirits and the customs to which they give rise, are substantially the same among all the tribes, and I shall presently give an account of them.

The Choroti also believe in *animal* demons. Thus they share the belief, held by all Indians in tropical and subtropical America, that a jaguar which attacks Indians or appears under unusual circumstances, is a »man-tiger» *i.e.* a man, generally a sorcerer, who has assumed the shape of this beast. Even in his lifetime a sorcerer may incidentally change

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Matacc

Choroti SK 6

776 himself into a jaguar and, appearing in this disguise, kill people. Similarly,
754 an evil wizard is believed to be able to send his soul into a horse, in which
825 shape he will kill the person whom he wishes to bewitch. The horse in fact is the particular shape in which the tutelary spirit of a sorcerer is believed to appear, and is therefore looked upon as a demoniacal animal. Of other animals which are looked upon with superstitious fear the deer must be especially mentioned. This shy and innocent animal is regarded as an evil spirit, a *möhsek*, and its flesh is never eaten by the Choroti. On this point these Indians share a belief which, curiously enough, is met with among many tribes in different parts of South America. In the noiseless movements of this animal and the mysterious rapidity with which it disappears into the forest there is in fact something »ghost-like», which is apt to awaken superstitious awe in primitive minds.

754 Just as a sorcerer is supposed to be able to change himself into a jaguar
825 when he wishes to harm other people, so he is also believed occasionally to assume, for the same purpose, the shape of a venomous reptile, for instance that of a rattlesnake. The bite of a venomous snake is generally attributed to the mysterious operation of an evil wizard.

776 Of spirits inhabiting what we should call inanimate objects the spi-
823 rits of the *stones* are of particular interest. In order to understand the ideas which the Choroti entertain in this respect it should be borne in mind that in the interior parts of the Gran Chaco, and particularly in the country inhabited by the Choroti, stones are extremely rare or almost unobtainable. It is in part due to this fact that the Choroti regard stones and pebbles in general with superstitious dread and would never, for instance, put on a necklace in which a stone of some kind entered as a decoration. The reason which they gave me for this aversion was that an evil spirit, a *möhsek*, dwells in the small stone and would infallibly invade the person who hung it on himself. The explanation was, moreover, added, that when a sorcerer bewitches an Indian he avails himself of a pebble-stone which he throws against his victim making him fall ill and
[755] die. Similarly, when the medicine-man cures the patient, he extracts the disease-demon in the form of a small stone. In other words, stones are shunned because they form one of the magic arrows which the sorcerers use to kill or harm their enemies.

753 The theory which the Choroti have formed about *sickness* and *disease* has appeared from some of the above statements. Sickness, like epidemic disease, is always due to supernatural operation. It is caused by a demon, a *möhsek*, directed by a human sorcerer. Wizards cause sickness by